



88047319

# MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

for

## ONAQUI - OQUIRRH PLANNING UNIT



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1977



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



US Department of the Interior  
(Bureau of Land Management,  
Salt Lake District, Utah)

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## INTRODUCTION

The increased demand for a variety of uses of public lands such as livestock grazing, wildlife, recreation, minerals, watershed, and sale of lands prompted the Bureau of Land Management to undertake the preparation of comprehensive land use plans to allocate the uses of these resources. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, or BLM Organic Act, now requires that the use of BLM land be projected by such a land use plan.

The planning system used by the BLM includes an analysis of detailed resource inventories to describe existing situations and to determine opportunities for managing lands, minerals, recreation, forestry, wildlife, watershed, and livestock forage. "Best" management recommendations for each particular resource are developed which often result in overlaps or management conflicts between resources. Tentative solutions to these competing or incompatible resource uses are then presented as multiple use recommendations. After a thorough analysis, the District Manager adopts a set of decisions--called a Management Framework Plan (MFP) to indicate how the public lands in the unit can best be managed for multiple uses. The MFP provides direction and guidance for all subsequent actions in the unit. Public participation involving organized groups, interested individuals, state and local government, and others is used throughout the planning process.

In the Salt Lake District, resource specialists began gathering resource data concerning the Onaqui-Oquirrh (On-a'kee-O-ke'r) Unit as early as 1967. A concerted effort was launched in 1976 to complete a MFP for the unit. Staff specialists recorded all available data about the various resources. Personal contacts were made and public meetings were held to obtain additional information and to help develop management recommendations concerning the resources within the Onaqui-Oquirrh Unit. After a thorough analysis, a set of multiple use recommendations were brought to the

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public for review. The numerous comments and suggestions were fully considered before the formulation of the MFP. The Onaqui-Oquirrh MFP was completed in October 1976.

The Onaqui-Oquirrh MFP is summarized in this document. The complete document is available for review in the Salt Lake District Office. The MFP provides management direction and guidance as well as a framework for future BLM actions in the unit. Specific actions and development proposed actions must also be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It is anticipated that the MFP will be revised from time to time to meet the needs of the people and to cope with changing local and national conditions. Major revisions will be accomplished with full public participation.

My staff and I wish to thank everyone who assisted in this effort, especially those attending our public meetings. We look forward to working with you in the future to formulate and update the district land use plans.



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## GLOSSARY:

As in most systems, BLM's Planning System has its own "language." To help you understand some of the terms used in this brochure, a glossary is included for reference:

Allotment Management Plan (AMP) - A detailed plan for intensively managing and improving a specific grazing allotment.

Environmental Statement (ES) - A document analyzing the

environmental impact of proposed or recommended actions and its alternatives on the human environment.

Habitat Management Plan (HMP) - A detailed plan to develop and manage a specific area for increased forage production or habitat conditions for aquatic or terrestrial wildlife.

Management Framework Plan (MFP) - A planning decision document which establishes, for a given planning area, land use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple use, and management objectives to be achieved for each class of land use or protection. It is the Bureau's Land Use Plan. It is prepared in three steps: Step One - Resource Recommendations; Step Two - Impact Analysis and Alternative development; and Step Three - Decision Making.

Public Lands - Public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM also manages a federal mineral estate where stewardship is limited to subsurface portions of the land.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) - Any vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain. Excludes registered motorboats, emergency and government vehicles.

Planning Unit - A portion of the Salt Lake District used for assembling resource inventory data and developing land use plans. For each planning unit the District Manager prepares a Unit Resource Analysis and a Management Framework Plan.

Unit Resource Analysis (URA) - A basic source of information on the land and its resources used as one of the foundations of the MFP. It consists of resource maps, physical profile and resource inventory summaries. It also evaluates resource potential and capability of the land to fill the public's needs for lands, minerals, recreation, wildlife, watershed, forest products, and range management.



## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Onaqui-Oquirrh Planning Unit stretches from the Salt Lake metropolitan area on the east to the top of the Onaqui Mountains on the west, and from the Great Salt Lake on the north to the Tooele-Juab County line on the south. It contains 815,000 acres of which 300,000 acres are public lands administered by the BLM. In addition, there are 420,000 acres of private lands, 50,000 acres of state lands, and 44,000 acres of military withdrawal lands. Within the planning unit, the BLM also manages 65,000 acres of federal subsurface or mineral ownership where the surface is privately owned.

The planning unit contains portions of five mountain ranges: the Onaqui Mountains, the Stansbury Mountains, the Oquirrh Mountains, the Sheeprock Mountains and Boulder Mountain in the East Tintic Range. Sagebrush, pinyon pine



*Oquirrh Mountains*



*Butterfield Canyon in the Oquirrh Mountains*

and juniper dominate these higher elevations. Within the periphery of these mountain ranges are Rush Valley and Tooele Valley consisting mostly of rangeland and irrigated cropland. Elevations range from 10,620 feet on Flattop Mountain in the Oquirrhs to 4,200 feet at the edge of Great Salt Lake.

Within the planning unit, average annual precipitation varies from 10 inches per year at lower elevations to over 40 inches per year on Lewis Peak in the Oquirrh Mountains. Approximately 60 percent of the total moisture falls during the winter with annual snowpack at higher elevations varying from 30 to 120 inches. Mean temperatures range from 88°F in July to 16°F in January. Most of the agricultural lands in Tooele Valley and Rush Valley are in 140 to 160-day frost-free zones allowing adequate growing season for gardens, hay, and grain crops. The frost-free growing season decreases

to 60 days at higher elevations.

Although less than 20,000 people reside in the planning unit, it is heavily impacted by adjacent urban areas. Salt Lake County has a population of 492,000, Utah County has 158,000, and Tooele County has 22,000. Per capita income is higher than state and national averages in both Salt Lake and Tooele Counties.

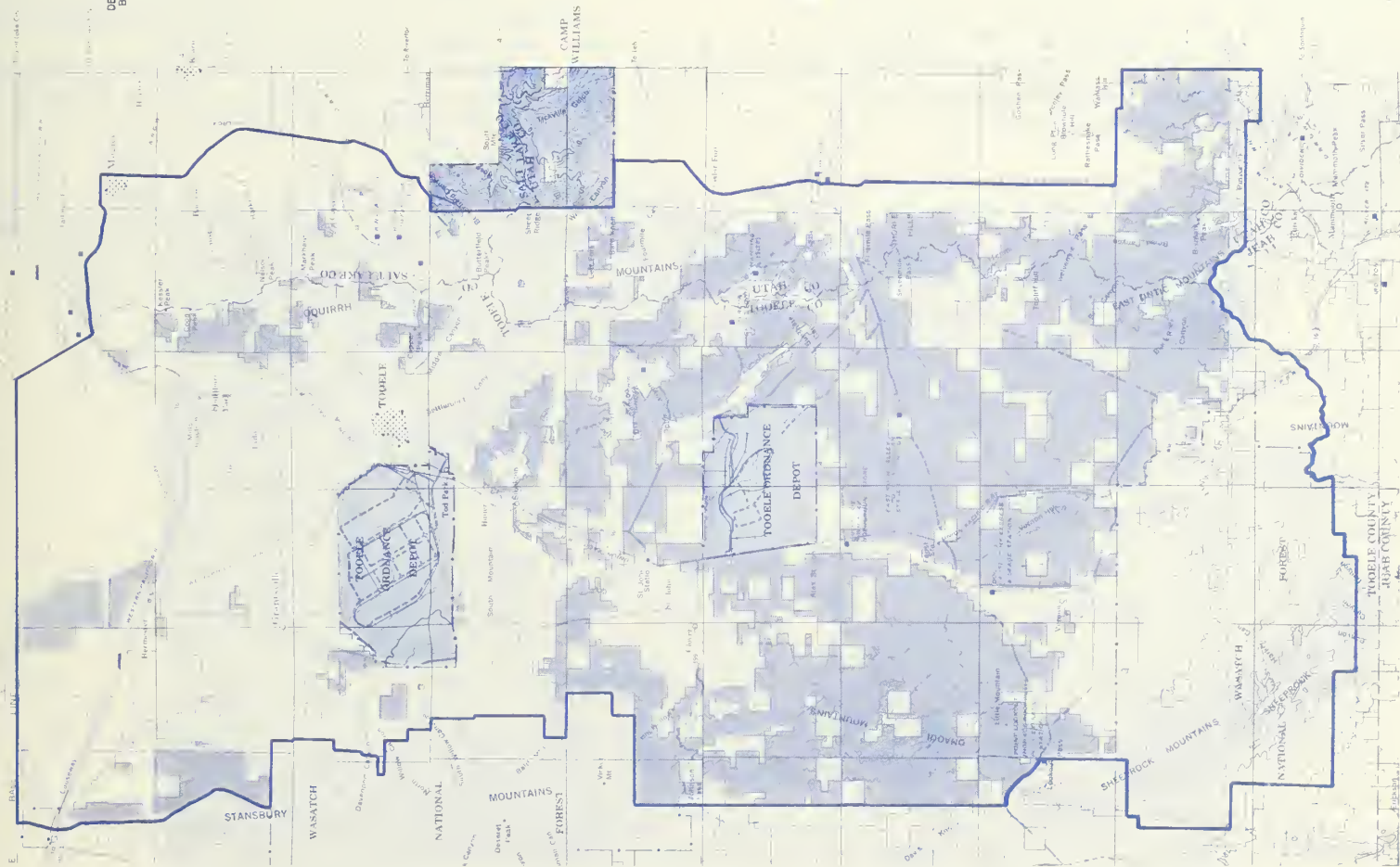
The proximity of the urban population has a major influence on resource management in the unit. Recreation demands are highly significant, particularly for off-road vehicle use. Several organized races are held each year. In addition, casual, unorganized use of public land for this popular sport is growing rapidly.

The economy in the planning unit is heavily dependent upon natural resource use and development. For example, the Oquirrh is one of the most mineralized mountain ranges in the world. Some \$10 billion in gold, silver, copper and other minerals have been produced since 1863. The Oquirrh Mountains support Kennecott Copper Corporation's operation, which is the largest private employer in Utah. The value of mineral production is about \$280 million annually. This activity generates 20,000 jobs and \$94 million in wages each year in the planning unit and surrounding area. The Tooele Army Depot is one of the largest single employers within the planning unit. Grazing, hunting, fishing, and general recreation use on BLM managed lands also contribute significantly to the economy.



*Tooele Valley and Oquirrh Mountains*

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## MAJOR ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The following is a summary of significant problems and issues in the Onaqui-Oquirrh Planning Unit:

The Onaqui Mountains contain critical wild horse habitat and deer winter range.

Rush Valley receives heavy ORV pressures from large urban areas along the Wasatch Front; consequently, the formulation of a travel plan to accommodate motorized vehicular use in the planning unit is mandatory.

The Oquirrh Mountains have large copper deposits plus critical deer winter range and critical elk habitat.

Intermingled public and private ownership patterns and conflicts with off-road vehicles, preclude effective management of the Oquirrh wild horse herd.

Small scattered tracts of public land in the Oquirrh mining area should be reviewed for disposal in support of this primary economic activity.

The Pony Express Trail has received national attention as part of the Bicentennial Program.

The Natural Resource Defense Council's suit will result in the completion of a detailed range environmental statement. (Part of the Great Basin Range ES).



*Dry farming and mine tailing in trespass on public lands*



## RESOURCES AND SIGNIFICANT MFP DECISIONS

### Lands:

The major thrust of the lands program will be to retain public lands in the planning unit. However, certain isolated tracts and special use areas were recommended for disposal or transfer to other agencies. These actions would:

Dispose of approximately 1,000 acres of scattered tracts to Kennecott or Anaconda for mineral development.

Provide suitable sanitary landfill sites for the communities of Clover and Cedar Fort where indiscriminate dumping is occurring.

Make a 112 acre tract in Middle Canyon available to Tooele County for recreational development under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

Withdraw 65 acres in Ophir Canyon to protect a spring



*Vernon Dump area available through Recreation and Public Purposes lease*

developed for culinary use by the town of Ophir.

Consider the disposal of 50,000 acres of potentially productive land for agricultural purposes. All disposals under the Agricultural Land Laws will be on an individual basis depending upon availability of water for irrigation and effects on other resource values.

Consider three applications for land tenure adjustments including an unintentional trespass, an isolated tract, and a Desert Land Entry. These are being reviewed to deter-

mine their suitability for disposition.

Consider two applications which are pending for lands surrounding Rush Lake which were classified in 1970 to private exchange. However, a review of wildlife and other important resource values may result in reclassification of all or part of this 1,726-acre area for continued ownership. If retained for public purposes, these lands could be made available to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act as a waterfowl management area.



*Utility rights-of-way are an important use of public lands.*

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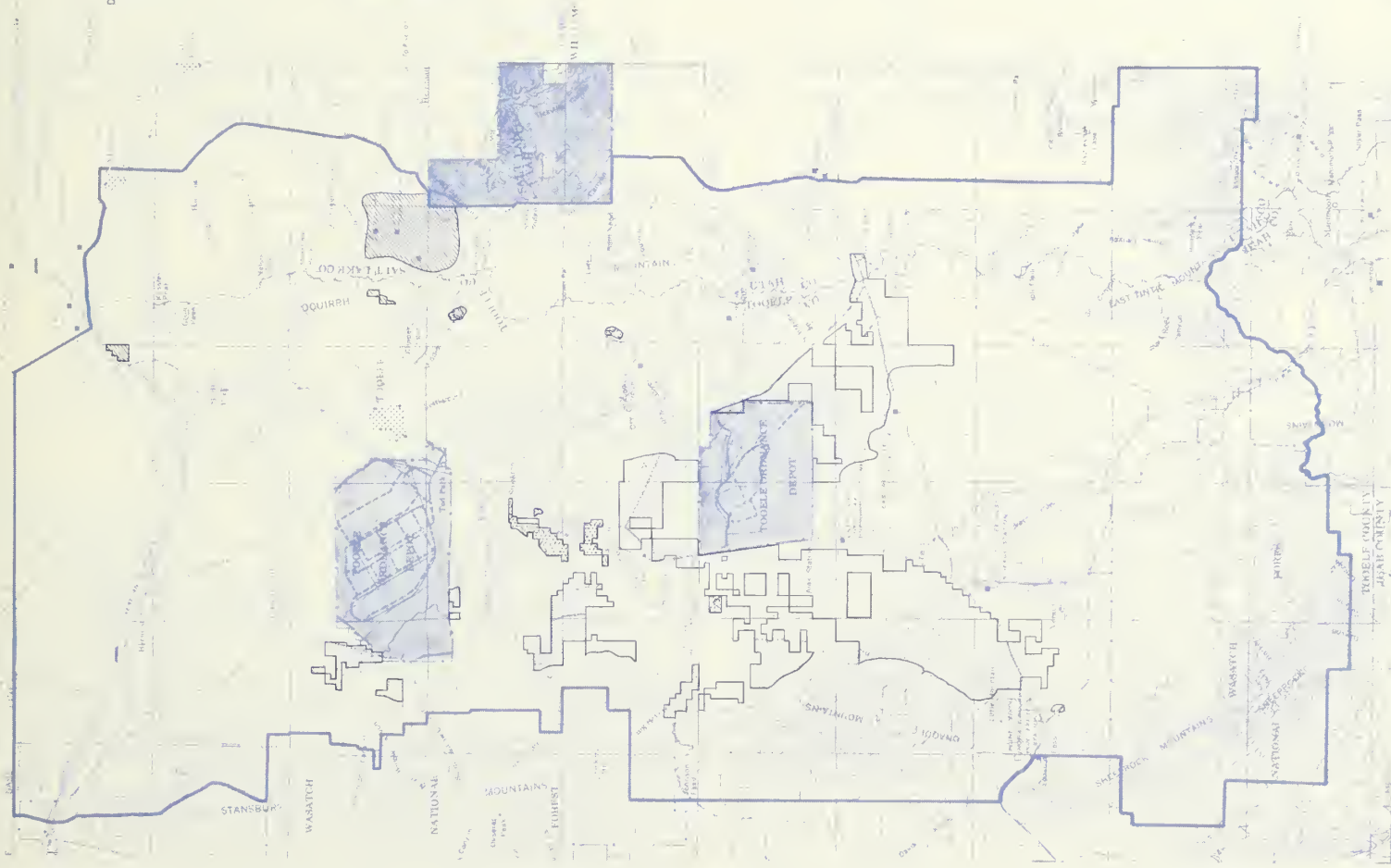
LEGEND  
Industrial  
Public Purposes  
Agricultural  
Classification Review

# LANDS



LOCATION MAP

0 2 3 4  
Scale in Chains

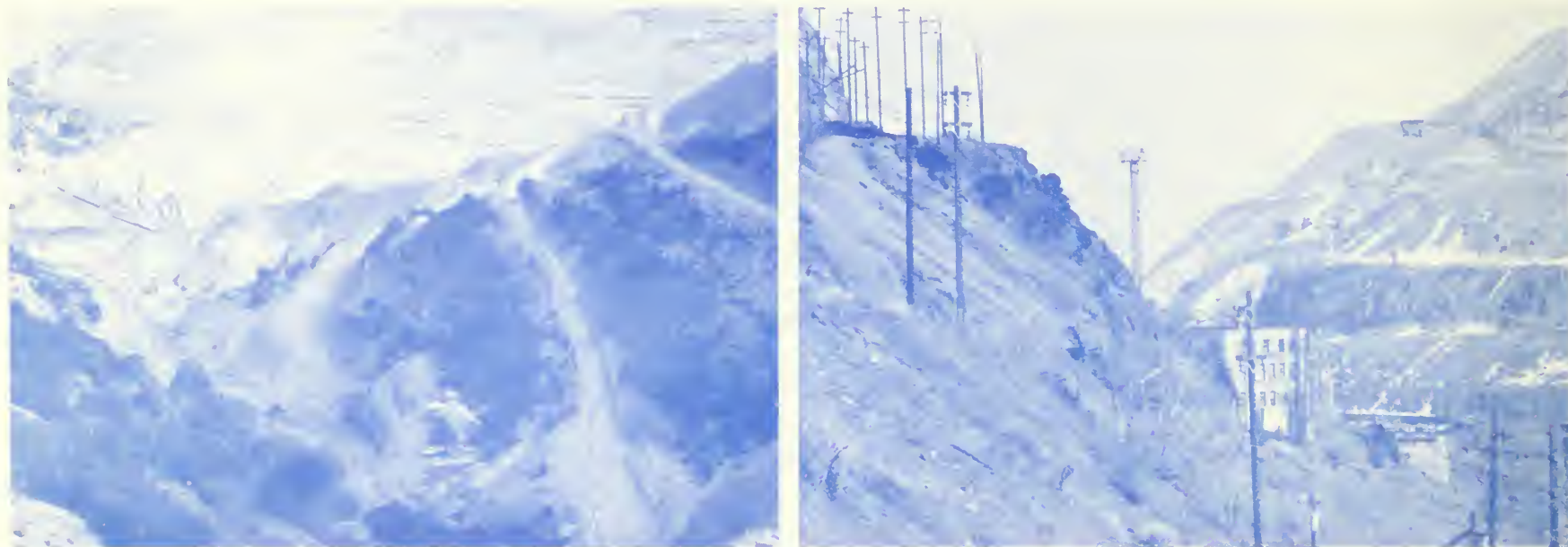




## MINERALS:

Except for the 112-acre recreation site in Middle Canyon and the 65-acre protective withdrawal for the Ophir water supply, the entire planning unit will remain open to location and development under the General Mining Laws. Oil and gas, geothermal steam, salines, and phosphates were identified as the leasable minerals having potential value. Except for a portion of the Stansbury Mountains, the entire unit is open to geophysical exploration, leasing, and subsequent development for oil and gas. The north end of the Stansbury Mountains will remain in a suspended category until the U.S. Forest Service completes their roadless/wilderness area study.

Several large areas were identified by the U.S. Geological Survey as potentially valuable for geothermal resources. Exploration, leasing and subsequent development activities will be restricted in these areas until further information is available. Phosphate resources have also been identified in the East Tintic Mountains. A study is proposed to determine grade, thickness and minability of these beds. Sand and gravel is available upon request from existing pits. No new pits will be opened until present sources are exhausted.



*Kennecott Copper mining operation in the Oquirrh Mountains*

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# ONAQUI QUARRIES PLANNING UNIT

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June 1971

## LEGEND

- Phosphate study area
- Potentially valuable geothermal steam areas (open to exploration and leasing)
- Potentially valuable saline areas
- Closed to oil/gas and geothermal steam geophysical exploration and leasing (the remainder of the unit is open for oil/gas geophysical exploration and leasing)
- Existing gravel pits
- All lands open for mining claim location except those shown in and on land map

## MINERALS



LOCATION MAP

Scale in Chains  
1 2 3 4

## RANGE MANAGEMENT:

The overall objective of the Range Management Program is to improve the condition of the range resource, enhance environmental values and produce forage sufficient to meet the demand. This objective will be accomplished through intensive grazing management as prescribed by Allotment Management Plans (AMPs).

To complement the development of AMPs and promote sound range management, some allotments will be consolidated. Where possible, cooperative agreements will be worked

out with the Forest Service in the management of certain allotments.

The planning unit contains substantial acreage of juniper and sagebrush which has virtually no potential to respond to intensive grazing management. To accomplish objectives for improved watershed condition, wildlife habitat, and increased livestock forage production, land treatment practices such as chaining, spraying, plowing, burning and seeding will be needed. Specific treatments will be recommended in the various AMPs.



*The local economy depends heavily on public land for livestock grazing*



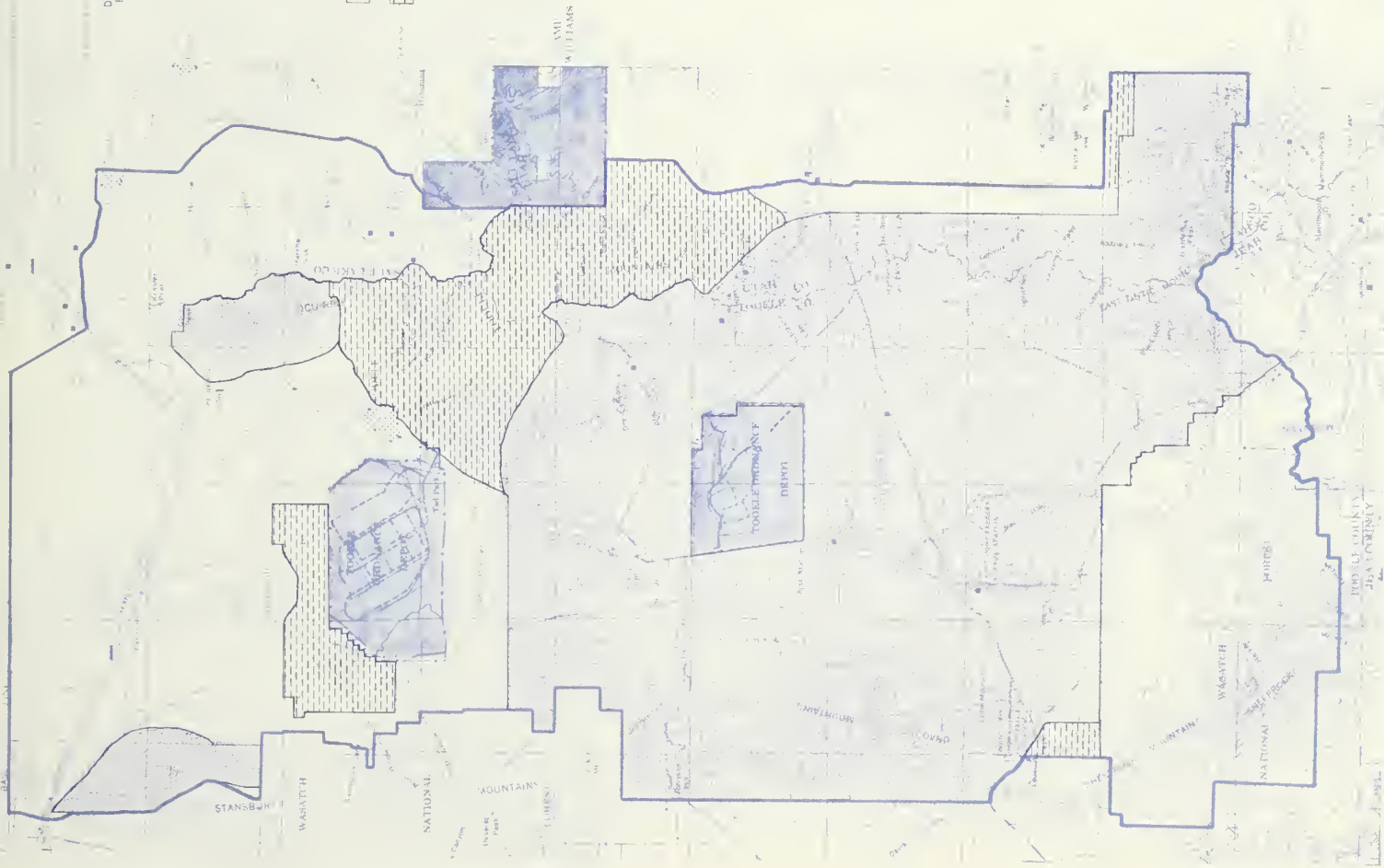
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# LEGEND

- Intensive livestock grazing  
management (Allotment  
Management Plans)
- Extensive livestock grazing  
management

## RANGE MANAGEMENT



## WILD HORSES:

There are two herds of wild horses in the planning unit. One herd is located in the Onaqui Mountains, and the other ranges the southern end of the Oquirrh Mountains and Rush Valley. The Onaqui herd contains approximately 100 animals and the Oquirrh herd is estimated at 50 animals.

A management plan will be prepared for the Onaqui Mountain herd to maintain it at an upper limit of 100 animals. This plan will be coordinated with ORV restrictions, back-country recreation, grazing, and wildlife use to provide protection for the horses and to minimize conflicts between these activities. A domestic horse grazing permit in the Onaqui Mountain Allotment will be cancelled or modified with a change-in-class of livestock to reduce serious management problems.

Because of conflicts with private landowners, ORVs, and mining, all wild horses will be removed from the Oquirrh Mountains. Damage to private land, high risk to other resource users, and probability of harassment, makes removal of the horse herd the most realistic way for BLM to fulfill its responsibility under the law. Horses will be made available for adoption after they are gathered.



*Wild horse herds roam the Onaqui and the Oquirrh Mountains*

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June •

1977

# LEGEND

Area of Extreme  
Conflict

## WILD HORSES





## RECREATION:

The overall objective for the recreation program is to retain lands administered by BLM in public ownership and available for recreational use. This is particularly true for large blocks of public lands. Natural beauty as well as historical, archaeological, geological, botanical, zoological, and other valuable resource values will be preserved.

The north end of the Stansbury Mountains will be preserved in an undeveloped condition until the Forest Service determines the status of the adjacent roadless area. The Onaqui Mountains will also be managed for undeveloped type recreation, wild horses, wildlife, and limited livestock grazing. Off-road vehicles will be restricted in this area and some roads at higher elevations will be closed.

The opportunities for obtaining key tracts of private or state land that are surrounded by public land will be investigated. Some tracts that are important for recreation use may be obtained by exchange. Examples are Broad Canyon, Lookout Pass, and Faust Canyon in the Onaqui Mountains.

Off-road vehicle use is one of the major recreation activities in the area. Suitable areas such as Rush Valley will continue to be available for organized events. Portions of Manning Canyon and Wells Canyon can be transferred to Utah County for development as ORV play areas. At this time, only the higher elevations in the Onaqui Mountains will be closed to ORV use because of conflicts with wild horses. Highly erosive soils on steeper slopes also justify the proposed closure.






A unit-wide travel and ORV plan will be developed in 1978 to identify all roads necessary for management and public use. In some areas, new roads will be constructed and in other areas roads will be closed to protect resources. The plan will identify necessary easements across private land to provide public access to land administered by BLM. Priorities will be established for acquisition of these easements.

Under the new ORV regulations, all BLM public lands in the planning unit will be designated either open, closed, or regulated. Existing signs and needs for new signs will also be reviewed in the transportation plan.



*Pony Express marker at Lookout Pass in an area heavily used for camping and ORV's*

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-  North Stansbury Mountain Roadless Area
-  Possible land exchange proposals
-  ORV Closures Areas
-  Heavy ORV use areas
-  Faust Pony Express Interpretive Site

## RECREATION



LOCATION MAP



## WILDLIFE:

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) has the basic authority to manage wildlife. The BLM's prime objective is to cooperate with the State in improving and expanding wildlife habitat. In managing wildlife habitat, land uses that are complementary to wildlife will be promoted.

There is potential for reestablishing populations of antelope in Rush Valley, and bighorn sheep and elk in the Stansbury Mountains. Although some conflicts would occur in Rush Valley, present uses such as ORV use and sheep grazing will continue. Elk likely would compete directly with wild horses and livestock in the Stansbury area and they may compete with deer and bighorn sheep in some instances. Reintroductions will be made only if unused habitat is available, and if populations can be controlled.



*Deer are common throughout the planning unit*



*Elk herds are concentrated in the Oquirrh and the Stansbury Mountain area*

There is potential for developing waterfowl habitat on the south shores of the Great Salt Lake near Grantsville. If adequate water is available, BLM will make land available to UDWR or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop this area for waterfowl.

In this planning unit water will be developed for wildlife and other uses. Specific plans will also be prepared for thinning and reseeding juniper and sagebrush areas for wildlife. In some cases, fire can be a valuable management tool for improving wildlife habitat if carefully controlled.

Where possible, BLM will encourage utilities to modify powerlines to prevent electrocution of eagles or hawks. New lines on public lands will be designed to minimize hazards to birds.



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Scale 1:50,000

# LEGEND

- Potential Antelope Reintroduction Area
- Potential Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Area
- Potential Elk Reintroduction Area
- Potential Waterfowl Marsh Development Area

# WILDLIFE



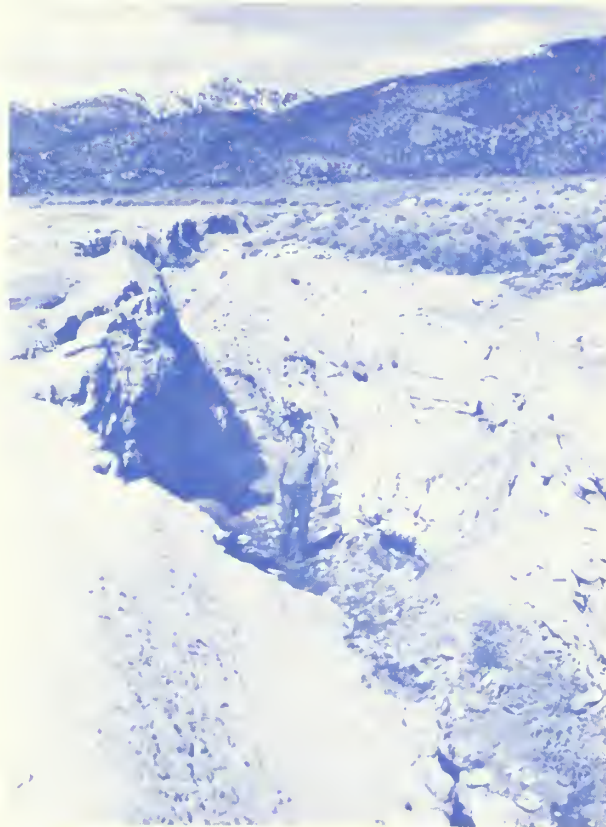
LOCATION MAP

Scale 1:50,000



## WATERSHED MANAGEMENT:

The basic objective of the watershed program is to reduce or control erosion. Intensive range management will be used to improve watershed conditions. Grazing systems and land treatments will be designed to increase the amount and improve the condition of vegetation, thereby protecting the soil from erosion. Comparative studies in the Onaqui area show that watershed conditions can be significantly improved by removing the juniper and reseeding more desirable species. Erosion can be greatly reduced in both juniper and sage-



*Concentrated slit laden water flowing from Mercur Canyon eroded this gully.*

brush stands by artificial treatments that will promote conversion to denser, more desirable vegetative species.

Large amounts of material eroded from the old mine dumps at Mercur are being deposited on public land. Erosion control and revegetation studies on the Mercur outwash area will continue.

## FOREST PRODUCTS:

Commercial forest stands will be protected for possible future use. Cutting juniper fence posts and Christmas trees will be allowed on designated sites. Christmas trees will be sold to the public to provide recreation outings, but they will not be sold commercially. Firewood is available to the public without charge, primarily from dead trees and old chainings. Non-commercial pinyon nut gathering will also be allowed.



*The Boulter Mountains contain productive pinyon pine sites*

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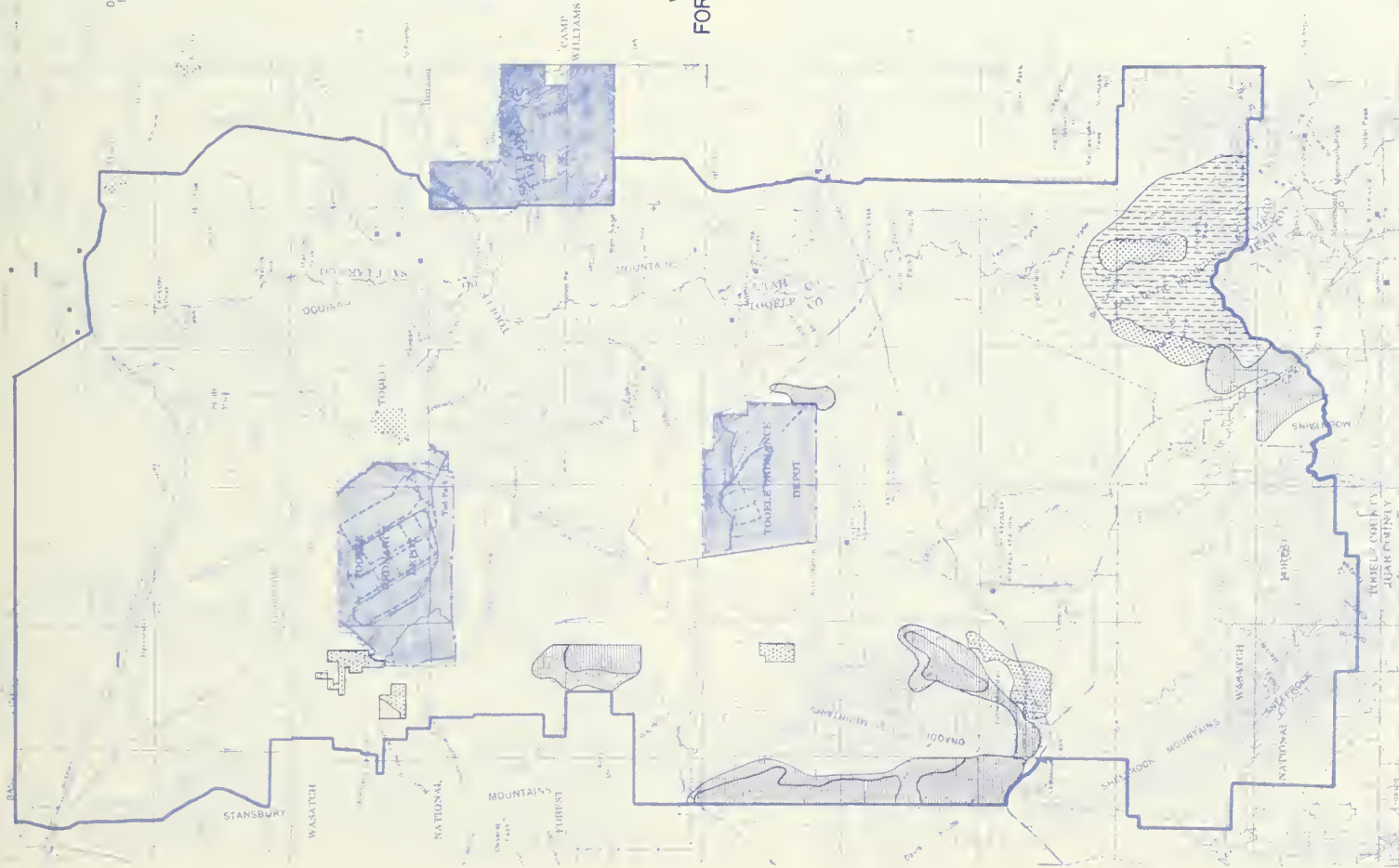
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# LEGEND

-  Juniper/Cedar Post
-  Christmas Tree
-  Piñon Nuts
-  Churning & Seeding
-  Plowing & Seeding
-  Mercur Outwash

UNITWIDE Intensive grazing  
management overlay for manage-  
ment areas

## WATERSHED FOREST PRODUCTS



LOCATION MAP





## CUMULATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW:

Environmental impacts resulting from lands and realty decisions are generally beneficial. Socioeconomic factors are most often affected by lands decisions, these decisions are designed to promote positive results, where possible.

Existing mineral development occurs along the mountain ranges within the unit. Characteristically, these areas possess high resource values relative to watershed protection, wildlife and scenery and these values are heavily impacted by mining activities. Mineral development, by its very nature, tends to commit the total surrounding environment.

Except for 177 acres, the entire planning unit is open to location under the General Mining Laws. On future developments, the surface reclamation stipulations required by Utah's Mined Land Reclamation Act of 1975 will tend to lessen the environmental impacts resulting from mineral development. Decisions that affect existing developments (Kennecott, Anaconda, Crossman, Flux, etc.) should result in positive socioeconomic impacts with moderate to low environmental impacts. Ghost towns resulting from past mining activities also provide positive social impacts such as historical and cultural interpretative values.

Certain impacts are anticipated from livestock grazing on public lands. Under most livestock management systems competition for forage between wild horses, wildlife and livestock is likely. These and other impacts will be evaluated during the development of allotment management plans and the range environmental statement.

Generally, the decision concerning wild horses will have positive environmental impacts. Removal of the Oquirrh Mountain herd will result in more realistic land use management by eliminating conflicts arising from horses using interspersed private lands. Adverse impacts to the Onaqui herd will be mitigated by obligating forage for the wild horse herd. Restricting ORV use and other management restraints

will reduce adverse impacts on the Onaqui herd.

As with wild horses, impacts on wildlife are mostly beneficial. Improved habitat conditions and forage allocations will enhance opportunities for wildlife. Land treatment practices to improve habitat conditions will result in some adverse visual impacts to landscape viewers. The degree of impact on the aesthetic resource will depend on the extent and design of the treatment. Chaining, spraying, and controlled burning will also result in changes in the landscape character. Burning will increase air pollution, but this impact would be short-term because of natural air movements. Overall, these land treatments will have beneficial impacts on watershed, wildlife habitat, and range values through increases in vegetative cover and improved species compositions.

Social and economic benefits often result from most recreation decisions, with little or no adverse environmental impacts. Preservation of natural areas tends to generate positive aesthetic impacts. Areas so designated generally preclude programs for improving range and watershed conditions and wildlife habitat.

Heavy or concentrated off-road vehicle use will result in soil erosion and wildlife harassment. Off-road vehicles users are often attracted to hillsides which tend to be most susceptible to erosion. Environmental impacts from off-road vehicle use are negative but some benefits are derived from meeting the demand for this type of use.

Critical environmental areas are shown in the following table.

## CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS:

AREA	KEY VALUES
Historic Peregrine Falcon eyries	Endangered species
Pony Express Trail	Historic, recreational
Onaqui Mountains	Wild horse range
Bingham Copper Mine	Historic
Stansbury Mtn. Roadless	
Study area - USFS	Scenic, recreational
Ghost Towns	Historical
USFS Benmore Experimental	
Station	Scientific
Camp Floyd	Historical
Rush Lake	Waterfowl

## INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS:

The Onaqui-Oquirrh plan was coordinated with several other planning efforts. Recreation, cultural and aesthetic elements correspond with the "Utah State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan." County government officials were consulted with as the plan was developed and informed of results. Decisions dealing with land are in accord with the land use and zoning requirements of the "Master Plan for Tooele County." Range, wildlife and ORV use on BLM lands also conform to the USFS plans for a Research Natural Area in the Stansbury Mountains. Since this area will be reviewed for possible wilderness classification, resource use and development on adjacent BLM lands have been modified to protect this proposed redesignation.

## ACTION BEYOND THE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN:

In response to changing resource conditions and management requirements, the Onaqui-Oquirrh plan will be updated and management decisions will be revised as new information becomes available. The public will have opportunities for review and input into the planning process when major revisions are made.

The MFP decisions will be used in programming and budgeting for the annual work plan. The planning documents also provide guidance for daily operations. Further direction will be developed in specific activity plans such as allotment management plans, habitat management plans and recreation management plans. These efforts will deal with specific site developments and localized problems.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires the evaluation of environmental impacts in advance of proposed actions or developments. Under agreement with the Natural Resources Defense Council, an Environmental Statement (ES) will be prepared to assess the impacts of proposed grazing management systems. The grazing allotments within the planning unit will be part of the Great Basin Range ES to be completed by 1982. In preparation for this effort, studies must be conducted to determine: the accuracy of existing forage surveys, range suitability, rare and endangered plants and animals, utilization and actual use, and range conditions and trend. Other individual developments will also require an environmental assessment record to evaluate the impacts of those actions.

*As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.*

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decisions for Onaqui -

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